

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 IO-13 ISO-00 AID-05 ORM-02 DHA-02  
FDRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06  
ABF-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /090 W  
-----261425Z 124195 /53

R 261050Z APR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6342  
INFO USMISSION GENEVA  
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT  
AMEMBASSY RABAT  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 1056

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, SREF, AG, SS  
SUBJECT: UNHCR MAKES NEW APPEAL FOR US CONTRIBUTION FOR SAHARA  
REFUGEES

REF: ALGIERS 0155

1. ON APRIL 23, GHASSEN ARNAOUT OF UNHCR, WHO IS ON ASSIGNMENT  
TO ALGIERS ON SAHRAOUI REFUGEE PROBLEM, CALLED ON EMBOFF TO MAKE  
NEW APPEAL FOR USG CONTRIBUTION TO UNHCR FOR SAHRAOUI REFUGEES.  
ARNAOUT IS ON TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT TO ALGIERS TO HANDLE UNHCR  
LIAISON WITH GOA AND TO OVERSEE UNHCR CONTRIBUTION TO  
SAHRAOUI. MR. BEN (FNU), A TURK WHO WORKS AT UNHCR GENEVA  
OFFICE AND WHO IS HERE TO ASSIST ARNAOUT, ACCOMPANIED HIM ON  
CALL.

2. ARNAOUT PRESENTED EMBOFF WITH WHAT HE SAID WAS COPY OF  
HIS REPORT TO GENEVA ON HIS AND BEN'S VISIT TO TINDOUF  
REGION MARCH 17-21. DOCUMENT GIVES USUAL DESCRIPTION OF  
UNPLEASANTNESS OF LIFE IN CAMPS AND ASKS UNHCR TO FURNISH  
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SPECIFIC QUANTITIES OF FOOD, TENTS ETC. WITHOUT BECOMING  
SPECIFIC, ARNAOUT SAID THAT UNHCR CONTINUED TO URGE THAT  
ALL GOVERNMENTS DISREGARD POLITICS OF SITUATION AND HELP  
DEAL WITH DEMONSTRATED HUMANITARIAN NEED.

3. ARNAOUT AND BEN MADE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON TINDOUF  
SITUATION:

A. NUMBERS: DESPITE CLAIMS THAT THERE ARE NOW 100,000 REFUGEES IN TINDOUF REGION, ALGERIANS HAVE MADE NO MOVE IN

THEIR CONVERSATIONS WITH UNHCR TO RAISE 50,000 FIGURE ON WHICH UNHCR PROJECTIONS BASED. ALTHOUGH ARNAOUT MADE USUAL NOISES TO EFFECT THAT REFUGEE FIGURES NOT BEING COMPLIED BY UNHCR, HE SUPPORTED BEN'S EMPHASIS THAT THERE WERE NOTHING LIKE 100,000 REFUGEES IN CAMPS. IN RESPONSE TO EMBOFF'S QUESTION, BEN SAID HE DOUBTED THAT MORE THAN 50-100 NEW REFUGEES HAD ARRIVED IN CAMPS RECENTLY.

B. ETHNIC ORIGIN OF REFUGEES: ARNAOUT REITERATED HIS BELIEF THAT OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF REFUGEES WAS SAHRAOUI ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT RULE OUT POSSIBILITY OF PRESENCE OF SMALL NUMBERS OF OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS.

C. CONTROL: BEN NOTED THAT REFUGEES WERE "WELL CLOSED IN" (BIEN ENCADRES) BY POLISARIO AND EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT THEY WOULD BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE CAMPS SHOULD THEY CHOOSE TO DO SO. ARNAOUT COMMENTED THAT THERE WAS SAHRAOUI "STATE" IN BEING IN TINDOUF REGION, AND THAT POLISARIO DOUBTLESS UNWILLING TO ALLOW POPULATION OF THIS ENTITY TO JUMP SHIP. BOTH ARNAOUT AND BEN OBSERVED THAT REFUGEE POPULATIONS DID NOT NORMALLY RETURN TO AREA THEY HAD FLED, AND BOTH AGREED WITH EMBOFF'S COMMENT THAT LACK OF TRANSPORTATION WOULD IN ANY CASE PREVENT ANYTHING BUT HANDFUL OF REFUGEES FROM LEAVING CAMPS.

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D. DIFFICULTIES OF WORKING WITH ALGERIANS: ARNAOUT COMPLAINED OF PROBLEMS OF WORKING WITH ALGERIANS. FORMIN FUNCTIONARIES WITH WHOM HE DEALS HAVE NO AUTHORITY, AND IT THEREFORE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO GET DECISIONS NEEDED FOR UNHCR TO CARRY ON ITS WORK.

E. WORLD FOOD PROGRAM (WFP) ASSISTANCE STALLED: ARNAOUT NOTED THAT PROMISED ASSISTANCE STALLED ON TECHNICALITY. WFP HAS INSISTED ON SIGNING ITS ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT WITH AGENCY OF GOA, WHILE ALGERIANS HAVE PROPOSED ALGERIAN RED CRESCENT AS THEIR SIGNATORY.

4. EMBOFF AGREED TO TRANSMIT ARNAOUT'S REQUEST TO WASHINGTON AND US MISSION GENEVA. LYNE

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009